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Karen Taylor Interview

Jacob Tynan
jtyna1@brockport.edu

Keegan Leslie Taylor
SUNY Brockport

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Keegan Leslie Taylor interview of Karen Taylor

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 0:02

This is Keegan Leslie Taylor interviewing Karen Taylor, on November 12 2019, about 5:20 in the afternoon within Karen's house in Naples, New York. Thank you for taking the time, Karen to sit down and have this interview with me.

Karen Taylor 0:17

No problem.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 0:19

So, I want to start off with a few generic questions, if you will, to get your background and whatnot for your scholastic history. So, what was your family's opinion of college?

Karen Taylor 0:30

My family was very strong about education. My grandfather insisted that I graduate from high school, which was difficult for me at that time. Because I lived in Charlotte and I went to school in Fairport, but he insisted that that I promise that a graduate and my parents, particularly my father was very adamant that I go get a good education because he always said you could... People can take anything from you, but they can't take away what you know. And you can use it to rebuild. That's a premise I went on.

Keegan

So, apparently you went to a lot of different schools. So, how did they feel after you chose your various institutions that you went to, apparently started with MCC, and you ended with Brockport. So and there was a whole bunch in between. So how did they feel about MCC to start with and then going down the list of schools, how would they feel about each and in each one if they had any feelings about it?

Karen

My parents?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:38

Well, whomever, apparently cause you also mentioned your grandfather, which on that on that note, before you get into that, which grandfather was it, that was very instrumental in telling you, "Hey, you need to go to college."

Karen Taylor 1:50

Donald Mullen, my mother's father.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:53

Okay.

Karen Taylor 1:55

And my father, as I said. I started at MCC because of the cost. And basically it because it was your Liberal Studies pretty much it was the stuff that you don't have to take anywhere else. So I started for the cost. And I liked MCC. It was a good school, I learned and then I transferred to Buffalo University. And I didn't like Buffalo University at all. It was huge, you were just a number, there's at least 100 people in the class. There, it was very multicultural. At that time, it was the highest school for international students. So there was a lot of professors that didn't hardly even speak English. And all you were was a social security number. I wanted more out of my education. So I decided to transfer to Nazareth. Now my mother went to Nazareth. So she was happy that I went to Nazareth. And that was a much better school, much smaller classes. I got a pretty good education there. And I graduated with my Bachelor of Science

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 3:19

A Bachelor's of Science, anything in particular?

Karen Taylor 3:22

I wanted to be a teacher. So it was art education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 3:26

Okay. And so for what about so when you're in Nazareth, what is it that obviously the smaller classes, things of that nature is there... or did you feel like you have more time one on one with the teachers at that point too?

Karen Taylor 3:38

Yes, and also, you know, the teachers would come up and they would be able to instruct you. Where when you have 100 people in a lecture hall, they can't do that. And also, they demanded the best out of you which I like a challenge, and I was definitely challenged. I at that time, was , you know, trying my hardest to get my teaching degree. And I would like the people I worked with at Nazareth. They were very good role models and mentors for teaching and I graduated with my teaching certification from Nazareth.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 4:22

So getting your teaching certification from Nazareth, did you also have to do student teaching field periods, things of that nature?

Karen Taylor 4:29

Yes, I had to do... because I was in art education, I had to do kindergarten through 12th grade and then I had to do... so I did the elementary and then I did the stuff that was high school. The high school wasn't so good... in student teaching, but it wasn't the college's fault was a teacher that I was under. She just left me alone. At Roth High School, which was at that time being, it was an interracial. They're trying to bus the kids from the city out to Henrietta. And so there's a lot of fighting and a lot of clashes and back then you had guns and nunchucks and everything else in schools. And so, it was quite difficult but I again rose to the challenge.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 5:28

Then so what happened once you got to Brockport?

Karen Taylor 5:32

When I... it took me a long time because then I had kids and I only had five years to get my masters to get my permanent certification in teaching. So I applied for an extended; another five years. And my husband had the GI Bill so I was able to go for a couple years and then I had to pay for the rest of it. And, I didn't know that he had that and then when I found out that he had that I thought I'd like to finish up and get my permanent certification. So I don't lose my teaching certification.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 6:08

And he didn't mind transferring that to you or anything like that?

Karen Taylor 6:11

Any what?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 6:11

He didn't mind transferring that to or anything like that?

Karen Taylor 6:14

No, no, we started off he went to school and I went to school and he had had a lot he had had the way it worked. Then he had a GI bill that would run out in a certain time, and he hadn't used it. So, either it got used or it was gonna just go away. And so he used it and I used it. But he decided to drop out because it was... he wasn't enjoying it. And I continued and then I continued working and paying for my, the rest of my master's degree.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 6:50

And how did everyone feel like we had discussed earlier how everyone felt like the various colleges you had your mother went to Nazareth and then well, you didn't care for UB, how did everyone feel about you going to Brockport?

Karen Taylor 7:05

I don't think my family cared what I did at that time. But was for me. It was very difficult. Because I was taking care of two kids, running a shop, working all day. Grocery shopping, coming home, and getting going to col... and then going and getting my, my class. And then I had my homework assignments, and I had to squeeze it all in. So I had to be Superwoman for a while.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 7:36

Was it basically all work and no play?

Karen Taylor 7:38

And it was a really stressful and stressed me out... a lot.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 7:43

I can imagine.

So you already mentioned how, as... Roth High School...?

Karen Taylor 7:50

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 7:50

You said? You had a lot of issues there. What was what was it like in high school for you when you were growing up?

Karen Taylor 7:57

Oh, Fair... I grew up in Fairport High School. Roth High School is where I did my student teaching.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F

Okay. Okay.

Karen Taylor

In Fairport High School. Fairport was a good school. I was a troublemaker. I got kicked out of the house when I was 16. So I lived in Charlotte and I had to get myself to Fairport. So I didn't go very often. But I did have an ED average. So they kind of forgot about my attendance. And I graduated, like my grandfather wanted me to

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 8:02

Okay. Okay.

Karen Taylor 8:03

In Fairport High School. Fairport was a good school. I was a troublemaker. I got kicked out of the house when I was 16. So I lived in Charlotte and I had to get myself to Fairport. So I didn't go very often. But I did have an eighty average. So they kind of forgot about my attendance. And I graduated, like my grandfather wanted me to.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 8:29

Just kind of swept it under the rug at that point because you still had the grades at that point.

Karen Taylor 8:33

Right. And they kind of wanted me out of there because I just strolled in and strolled out, when I wanted to. And that's because I had to, I had to work. I had to support myself. And I had to get a way to get out from from the city of Rochester to Fairport, which was difficult on top of it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 8:55

Very well. So obviously, you had an interesting time at high school. With minimal attendance, but still getting your grades that you needed to. So how did you feel about college, during high school, and then after high school, what did you go immediately after high school?

Karen Taylor 9:12

No. I was diagnosed with a chronic illness. And I was told that I could not do any physical labor ever, and that I probably had about a year to live. And so the doctors told me I needed to get an education, because I wouldn't be doing physical labor anymore. I was at that time a cleaning lady at an apartment complex, and they made me quit my job. And so I decided to go to MCC, start there and get an education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 9:50

So obviously went out of kind of necessity and forced to go to college at that point, if you will. I wouldn't say necessarily forced but you didn't have any, very many other options. So you thought, what do you think it was this or nothing, at that point going to Brockport or not going to go to Brockport, but going to any college at that point?

Karen Taylor 10:07

I figured that it's something that once I, once I reconcile, and I didn't die in a year and I had lived to about three more years, I decided, Well, I better do something with myself and I know I have to support myself one way or another. So, the only way I could see it was to go to college. And I love to learn. So, I went to MCC. And it was good.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 10:37

Then when you were at MCC was it just for the two-year program, like you try to do with two plus two or something along those lines?

Karen Taylor 10:44

No it was just a two-year program and luckily all my all my credits transferred to Buffalo University.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 10:51

Well, that's good. And then did you have any trouble, trouble issues with your credits transferring from one college and next after that and seeing how you know, Nazareth after that, and then Brockport.

Karen Taylor 11:02

I had a couple problems because I took things like the philosophy of art. And there's buffalo was trying to tell me that that was an art course which it wasn't, it was a philosophy course. So I had all my books and I had to go before a committee and prove to them that this was not an art course it was a philosophy course. But they did accept all my credits after I presented my...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 11:29

After you gave them a little bit of a hassle.

Karen Taylor 11:31

Yeah, well put it this way we negotiated..

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 11:36

So well, well, now that we've gotten through most of that, did you live on campus at, UB... actually all the colleges. Did you ever live on campus except for obviously Brockport, you said you were living with your husband at the time and then taking care of the kids take care of everything else. So clearly you weren't living at Bro.. Brockport on campus?

Karen Taylor 11:56

No.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 11:56

But, what about Nazareth, UB or MCC?

Karen Taylor 11:59

I lived at UB on campus.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 12:02

Okay.

Karen Taylor 12:02

And I didn't like it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 12:04

What is it... well obviously you said why you didn't like the classes before, but why did you like living on campus at UB?

Karen Taylor 12:09

Because there's two campuses, one was Amherst and one was, well, down Main Street. And you had to go back and forth on a bus. And the first time they, of course, I went to MCC. So I was a junior I wasn't a freshman, they put me in a room with three freshmen and myself, which I found extremely challenging.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 12:35

Especially being a junior at that point.

Karen Taylor 12:36

Mhm. And you know, it was just a different mindset. And then I went to, I transferred down to Main Street but, I had to walk the, the art building that was down I did took a lot of fine arts at buffalo University and the building was a old metal casting factory, which I had to walk to at night, I by myself, so I ended up doing things like making a shillelagh with a real, um, brass.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 13:09
Oh, real brass at the end of it, huh?

Karen Taylor 13:11

Yeah, so case I ran into any little scoundrels out there, which were there was plenty of them. It was so it was kinda you know it was it. And plus because it was so International, I did get along with a lot of friends from Lebanon. And I hung around with a lot of Lebanese people, I learned some different things from culture, which I appreciate. But also I did not appreciate the attitude of some other people, such as the Chinese. They were told not to associate with the Westerners and they wouldn't say hello, and they wouldn't do anything. They had their own dorm. And I didn't appreciate that. So there's a lot of negative things I didn't like about buffalo.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 13:56

Sounds like it. Sounds like a very eclectic mix there. That didn't necessarily didn't, well, mix well.

Karen Taylor 14:01

Yeah, and I would say the, the white American was a minority.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 14:06

There at UB?

Karen Taylor 14:07

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 14:07

Wow, I imagine it's not the same way at Naz or Brockport.

Karen Taylor 14:12

No, Nazareth was a nice Christian school. And my artwork can sometimes be dark. It was a little challenging, but I did have good professors. And, I did learn quite a bit.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 14:30

Did the... I know Nazareth now requires, like religious classes did they still do it then?

Karen Taylor 14:35

Yes.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 14:36

And then did you butt heads with that because of, as you mentioned, your dark artwork?

Karen Taylor 14:41

No, no, cause I took a course called religious religion and self-discovery. And it was really cool because we learned all the different religions and then you got to kind of figure out where you fit in. And so that really kind of solved my, my issue with where I fit in with God

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 15:02

Hm, that works. So, obviously you had all these different schools, but ultimately what made you choose Brockport for your master's program?

Karen Taylor 15:13

Because it was a state school and because I could afford it. And one thing that was wonderful about Brockport, was the fact that most of the time I could go downtown, I lived downtown Rochester, and I could go downtown Rochester for most of my courses.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 15:27

Oh that's right, they do have a downtown campus. Don't they?

Karen Taylor 15:30

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 15:30

Okay.

Karen Taylor 15:30

Yep. We had the Equal Opportunity Center. And they also had a lot of hands on stuff. Like I took the history of Rochester at the Strong Museum and we went out and we looked in at all the old places and all the... and we just had, we had the guys old cronies coming in to talk to us about stuff that was going on in Rochester that they remember from 80 years ago. So it was really interesting. And then after that, I had to write a fifty-page paper on something, and I wrote it on the abolitionist movement; tied it in with Frederick Douglass and slavery in the art and music of the time. That was really kind of a tough paper.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 15:57

That sounds pretty interesting mix there.

Karen Taylor 16:13

Yeah. Yeah, I got an A.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 16:15

Well you said eighty-page paper that would be one heck of paper at that point.

Karen Taylor 16:19

Yeah

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 16:20

That must have had a lot of research to do.

Karen Taylor 16:23

Yeah, and also putting the institution of slavery with the Underground Railroad, with the abolitionist movement, which Rochester was number one in the abolitionist movement because of Canada. And then Frederick Douglass lived in Rochester. And so Frederick Douglass was the main person of Rochester, associated with the abolitionist movement, but then I wanted to use the art and music of the slaves. On how they used that for the Underground Railroad, and the abolitionist movement. So, and all of that was really interesting. And my teacher was the librarian of the Rundell library. And so there was access to a lot of information and it was just really enlightening and fun. And I couldn't wait to go to class. So, and Brockport offered a lot of that kind of thing. So I really liked it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 17:24

So they offer you pretty much a lot of the... not so run of the mill generic classes that you found everywhere else. There was just something more that intrigued you.

Karen Taylor 17:33

Right.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 17:33

Okay.

Karen Taylor 17:34

And I, I only took a few classes at the campus of Brockport. Most of them were downtown Rochester,

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 17:42

Okay.

Karen Taylor 17:43

At different places.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 17:45

So for your masters, what made you choose that? What made you choose your major for your masters? That topic.

Karen Taylor 17:51

I went into? Alright, well, my topic for my master's was counseling and teaching kids with special needs.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 17:58

Okay.

Karen Taylor 17:59

I just had to take a history course, you know, this English course which that was difficult 17 novels in one semester and a paper on each one.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 18:10

That's quite a bit.

Karen Taylor 18:11

Yeah. And, so but again a challenge and, I, the professors were good at Brockport, there was a course I took mind, body and spirit. And it was a science course. And it was really interesting to figure out, you know how everything inter-connects and the professor and I did not have the same opinion. But we would debate and have fun at it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 18:41

Okay.

Karen Taylor 18:42

It was it was good. And then I took a counseling course and I had a great psychiatrist teacher, and you know, I took several counseling courses. So and then teaching kids with special needs, which later on I had a child with special needs. So that helped me out. And then later after that I had a career teaching kids that were hoodlums. That got kicked out of school and my education at Brockport helped me with all of that.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 19:16

Sounds like it. So was there... So that's pretty much why you wanted to pursue the major that you did, was it for also for your masters is to help out kids.

Karen Taylor 19:25

Yes. And also because I had a rough childhood, I wanted to help those that were struggling and I understood the struggle, and I did my best to try and get them back on track. And also I have learning disabilities myself that I conquered, and I know that other kids needed to get some help and those with someone, you know, quality understanding not just... and I think the quality understanding comes from living it and then being able to teach it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 20:02

Mhm. You mentioned that you felt like you had some learning disabilities, did you kind of pick up on more and more of these as you went through your courses? Or, were they brought up to you by someone else?

Karen Taylor 20:15

It was brought up to me, finally, by my professor at Nazareth. And I didn't know it until then. And the time period when I grew up, if you were a kid that didn't get stuff, I would get hundreds in things, like biology and on my report card and history and things, but I would always fail math. I never could understand math. And I was terrible at spelling. And my parents always punished me. They didn't. They said, if you can do it here, you can do it there and you know, I was always in trouble about that. And then when I went to Nazareth, I really tried to take a course, a one on one math, and I could not get it. And I ended up throwing my test at a

teacher, because I got a D, I never got D's, I got straight A's. And he said, I had to go back and talk to him and say, Hey, I'm sorry for the way I behaved you know... And he goes, Well, normally you'd be in big trouble. But because I see you study, I see you ask questions and I looked up your transcripts, and you have high grades in everything else. I want to have you tested. So, he had me tested and my right and my left brain don't work together. And so what happens is things go both ways. Whenever this eye does one thing, and this eye does another thing, and so for in order for me to focus, it's very difficult. And my right brain is genius level and my left brain is handicapped. And I finally found that out in college.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 22:02
And this was at Nazareth, you said?

Karen Taylor 22:04
Yep.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 22:05
And that was... this professor, that helped you... well, well helped you through figuring that out. But was he kind of like a mentor to you at that point afterwards or...

Karen Taylor 22:14
No, he was...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 22:14
Or did you have any other mentors in Nazareth or Brockport...

Karen Taylor 22:17
I had a...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 22:19
Or any other colleges, for that matter.

Karen Taylor 22:21
I had a mentor at, well, I would say my favorite teacher at MCC was my bi, biology teacher, he was a real good guy. My grandfather had passed away. And I couldn't take the exam, and he let me take it later. And the art courses were decent at MCC. And then when I went to Buffalo University, the art they only accepted 20 people in the art program. So it was all competitive. And it was I, you'd come back and your... somebody spilled ink all over your drawing, or they'd steal your work. And that was not why I was going to school. I was going to school to learn. I didn't need that stuff and I didn't want it. So I switched to Nazareth. And Nazareth, there again was more of a small class, hands on.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 23:22
Did you feel like it was a little less cutthroat at that point? Because of like you mentioned

Karen Taylor 23:26

Yeah. Oh yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 23:27

...that people were sabotaging your portfolios, essentially.

Karen Taylor 23:29

Yeah, it was definitely cutthroat at Buffalo University. But Nazareth was not so much cutthroat but I was kind of a fish out of water at Nazareth.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 23:39

How so?

Karen Taylor 23:40

Um?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 23:41

Being a fish out of water, anyway?

Karen Taylor 23:43

Most it was most preppy. It was a lot of preppy, rich kids that went to Nazareth. And I wasn't one of them. I, you know, wasn't even living home. I was supporting myself and trying to get, pull myself through school. So it was a totally different thing. You know, most the kids are living on campus and you know, they just call up their parents and get the money they needed and stuff like that.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 24:13

At Nazareth college.

Karen Taylor 24:14

At Nazareth college.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 24:15

...and yeah because you mentioned, the preppy mindset.

Karen Taylor 24:17

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 24:17

Well, what so, was there any kind of, I would say... groups you were part of then, at Nazareth that you kind of felt more akin to?

Karen Taylor 24:30

Only one person, Marilyn Hawrylik, and oh, another one Tom Angeleno. Who I'm still friends with today. Those are two people that just, I clicked with and have clicked with since.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 24:45

So do you, so you still keep in contact with them, apparently.

Karen Taylor 24:48

Yes.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 24:48

Those are the only, only two people that you really keep in contact from, from college time.

Karen Taylor 24:53

Yeah, they were the only people that I really could associate with, that, that had the same. Marilyn was working at Kodak, supporting herself, going through school too. I think it's a big difference when you support yourself to go through school, versus having your parents support you. Because you're paying for it. And I was paying for it. And it was expensive. And so, I was serious about getting my work done and doing well.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:22

Pretty much just come in, and this is business as usual, essentially, because if you didn't pass or didn't do well then you're just throwing your own money out the window.

Karen Taylor 25:31

Yep, exactly.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:32

Okay.

Karen Taylor 25:34

And I was working too hard for my money and working too hard to get to college to do that.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:38

I can imagine. Well, especially after what you said you were going through when you were attending Brockport.

Karen Taylor 25:44

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:46

Is there, so you, you have those two friends from college. Did you have any that you kept in contact through, from high school?

Karen Taylor 25:51

No, that was, I met them at Nazareth.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:54
Both Marilyn and you said Tom.

Karen Taylor 25:56
Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:57
Okay.

Karen Taylor 25:57
Tom Angeleno

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 25:58
Ange.. Angeleno. Okay. Well, now that we mentioned, we also kind of mentioned... Well, actually, before I get to that, I want to ask you... so you said the one thing to you, you that one professor, I think it was at Nazareth gave you like a little leeway after your grandfather died.

Karen Taylor 26:17
He was very compassionate. And he I had to take an exam and my father tracked me down and, I saw my father in school and I'm like, oh, why is my father doing here? And he told me that my grandfather had died.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 26:35
Was this your grandfather, Mullen?

Karen Taylor 26:36
Yep.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 26:37
Did that, how did that affect you, because he actually pushed you to go to school, in, in some way. Did that really affect you, scholastically?

Karen Taylor 26:46
It affected me very hard, emotionally. And I was supposed to have gone right in and taken an exam. When my father showed up, and my biology teacher, it was a biology exam. And he told me that don't worry about it, we'll do it later. And he was very compassionate and understanding about how I felt, and didn't give me any hassles. I took the exam when I got back to school. Got a ninety nine on it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 27:20
Well, there you go. Still came and applied yourself pretty damn well.

Karen Taylor 27:22

I just like biology.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 27:25

That's fair. It's one of the easier sciences, right?

Karen Taylor 27:28

Yeah, I had a good, I had a Jamaican lab partner who wanted to be a nurse. So she cut up all the rats, and the pigs, and everything, and I taught her all the terminology and systems and things like that. So it worked out pretty good.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 27:46

So a symbiotic relationship at that point, you don't have to, to do with the nitty gritty but...

Karen Taylor 27:50

Didn't have to get my hands dirty.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 27:51

Right. Well, I was I was briefly talking about high school too, with... because I wanted to know if you had any friends that you had kept in contact from high school, what, was there any... What was the biggest differences you had from your first semester of college and then also high school, obviously you already mentioned that well High School was kind of laissez faire for you.

Karen Taylor 28:13

I had a lot of great friends from from high school, which are still friends of mine. And I keep in touch with them...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 28:23

Okay.

Karen Taylor 28:23

But, they were more, you know, we're just close knit. And, I just went on a, we just all turned 60. And I went on a cruise with them. This, uh, just last spring.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 28:40

Okay.

Karen Taylor 28:40

So, I'm still in touch with them.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 28:42

Certainly having your fun then, too.

Karen Taylor 28:44

Yeah, we had fun. I can say that we... I had fun.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 28:49

I'd ask you about your college to adult life, but it seems like it mixed pretty well together. At that point.

Karen Taylor 28:54

Well, when I was 17 I got diagnosed with lupus so...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 28:57

Right.

Right, you mentioned that.

Karen Taylor 28:57

I and then I went into a very bad depression over it. And I was told that I should not go back to school. I needed to go back to school and I needed to get an education but I shouldn't have gone back to school when I did. But I forced myself to try to move on and MCC allowed me that, um, I started off slow. And it got me back into living. The land of the living. And so, that was good.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 29:29

Being able to apply yourself pretty much helped pull you out of your depression that you had going on?

Karen Taylor 29:34

Yeah, and understand the fact that you know, you gotta seize the day and do what you gotta do. And it's in God's hands.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 29:45

So were you a fan of the movie, Dead Poet's Society?

Karen Taylor 29:47

Yes.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 29:48

Carpe Diem.

Karen Taylor 29:48

Yes, definitely.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 29:51

That doesn't surprise me. So obviously you were busy throughout a good portion of, uh, Brockport, as you mentioned. You were going from work to school, taking care of kids, take care of things around the house...

Karen Taylor 30:04

Also ran my own business, took my children to work with me.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 30:09

Right. Yeah, that was, um...which business was that, again?

Karen Taylor 30:14

That was a consignment shop called Something For Everyone.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 30:18

Okay.

Karen Taylor 30:19

And basically, I took my two kids with me and packed their lunches, and stuff, and I would have to work and take care of my children, and then take my children home, and then go to school, and then try and take care of the home as much as I could and... do it all over again. And write my papers in between.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 30:40

So the times that you're... so that covers pretty much what you were doing Brockport outside of classes. What were, did you have anything that you'd like to do outside of class at MCC, UB or at Naz?

Karen Taylor 30:52

Outside of class? Um... I like nature. I like to socialize. I like to cultural things. So...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 31:03

Well, you like cultural things, but the culture, culture there at UB was a little too segregated for you.

Karen Taylor 31:10

It was segregated and there were different ones, like I mentioned China, they wouldn't even talk to you. They wouldn't even look at you. And then also it was at the time of the Iran conflict. And I had people coming up telling me that I'm a pig, because I'm an American. And, I'd be like, if you don't like it, get on the boat and go home, you know, what are you doing in this country? And basically, they'd say, Well, I'm getting my education and it's like, okay, get your education here and go back to where your go, going. First of all, you should have gratitude that you are in a country that does offer an education. And, basically, you should show more respect than they were, and I believe that they needed to then make a decision on whether or not they liked it in

this country or not. And if they didn't like it, they should go back home. And they went back home and took our technology with them. And that's why we're here where we are today.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 32:19

Some, I would imagine some of the technologies developed a little bit better, maybe not.

Karen Taylor 32:24

Well..

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 32:25

Depends on the way you wanna look at it...

Karen Taylor 32:25

...you look at the look at the the countries that now have our technologies like China and Mexico, and things like that. They have our factories, they have our intelligence, they have our jobs, they have our industry. Back when I went to school, that was not the case. But because of education and because of being able to come to this country and get a better education. That's what they were doing, then. Not all of them, there were some that there were some I learned a lot, and like I said, the French Lebanese I hung out with all the time. They were Christian. There's a difference too, because the Muslims and the Christians were a little bit different in their thinking. And so...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 32:46

Because Lebanon is, I want to say is it North Africa or is it, more of the Baltics?

Karen Taylor 33:22

Middle East, I believe...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 33:23

Some Baltic Middle East area, okay.

Karen Taylor 33:25

But they were French Lebanese that I hung around with. And I knew some Muslims. I ate lunch with the Prince of Jordan.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F

That must've been an interesting story to have.

Karen Taylor

So... It, it is. I learned a lot of interesting stories, and I really enjoyed a lot of it, but I didn't like the attitude of you're a pig. Because you're an American.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 33:35

Well, that begs the question... Obviously, you mentioned the Iran issue. Was there any other events, world national events, anything of that nature that affected your college experience clearly, already, you mentioned a few. Was there anything outside of that that helped mold your experience with college?

Karen Taylor 34:08

Yeah, one was my childhood, molded my experience to try and help kids that were in trouble and had disabilities. And then the other thing the Iran conflict, anybody who looked like they might be Middle Eastern, you know, had a lot of trouble. And, ah, you look to see what the discrimination was like, and I learned that and then when I went to Nazareth, I learned a little bit about more about faith in God because you know, taken that course.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 34:41

Because the religious courses that Nazareth had you take. And then, well, you also chose to do a few on your own.

Karen Taylor 34:47

and then when I went to Brockport, and learn some really interesting things about the place I lived, but then also I learned there's only so much a person can do and that they need support, and I was not getting that at the time from my husband, and that caused a lot of strife between us. It's very difficult to be Superwoman...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 35:15

Right.

Karen

...And that's what I was trying to be. I would say MCC pulled me out of a depression and got me on the road. So all of that my education really formed a lot of things. And when I did get my masters when I got my bachelor's and when I got my masters I did feel the, the power of what a success can do for a person.

Keegan

Okay.

Karen Taylor 35:44

Yeah, I worked hard and I did I got a four point on my master's degree. I never had anything less than A's

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 35:52

Not a lot of people could say that about their graduate studies.

Karen Taylor 35:55

Yep. And so, you know, I really but I learned so much that I could teach. I was a better teacher because of all the different experiences I had in the different places that I had.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 36:09

And then so as you mentioned the teaching. So I guess after, as you said, to help you better teach better, what career path did you go with after you were done with all your schooling? It was mid, early, early 94-95. When you're done with your degree, um, were you did you still have the consignment shop? Or did you go on to actually go do.. pursue some form of teaching?

Karen Taylor 36:32

Well, basically, I the consignment shop was to put me through the rest of my master's degree. And then when I was done, with, with that I started a daycare center at my house and I use my teaching abilities and I also worked at a daycare center in Rochester and in Washington DC. So I ran a daycare center out of my house because I wanted to take care of my kids. And I wanted to also, you know, I had to make some money to support the family. So it was very difficult time. For..

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 37:14

Sounds like it.

Karen Taylor 37:15

Yeah, it was very stressful to have some boys and one girl and one that had down syndrome and try to make it all work and be responsible for that. So, I decided when my youngest went to kindergarten, I was gonna do something different. And I ended up getting my real estate license.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 37:42

So you're, at that point you weren't even using your degree what you went to school for?

Karen Taylor 37:47

No, I wasn't using my.. I wasn't using what I went to school for. But I would say it was using my ability to negotiate that I learned in school.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 37:58

From your counseling classes. And also, anything that was kind of related to it.

Karen Taylor 38:04

Yep.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 38:04

Okay.

Karen Taylor 38:05

Public speaking, all that kind of stuff.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 38:08

I can imagine you had a whole lot of tough, well I guess, being a realtor, you have a lot of public speaking going on.

Karen Taylor 38:16

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 38:17

Is it, would that be more public or interpersonal in your eyes?

Karen Taylor 38:20

Depends on whether you have to deal with the whole family or whether you're dealing one on one. But normally you have to deal with the banks, the lawyers, closings, buyers, sellers, everybody, listings, you have to go in there and do a presentation. So, college preps you to be able to put a presentation together in order to go get a listing.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 38:46

I can see that. Thinking about that, as you said college helps you put all this together. Now your first semester you ever had was at MCC, if you're looking back through all the different schoolings that you went through with Brockport, Naz, UB, MCC. Is there anything, for your first semester, was there anything you, would you go back and go tell your younger self, "Hey, can you do this a little differently to make life easier for you down the road, road? Or that, hey keep up the good work?" What would you tell yourself?

Karen Taylor 39:19

I had, I was a very hard struggle my first semester because I was still sick. And I was very tired, and I couldn't... I would go to class and I just, you know, after class. And so it was, I would say it was a very hard struggle to get through my first semester, but when I did it, it proved to me that I could do it. And so it gave me the strength to carry on.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 39:48

So basically, you're pretty much saying, Hey, you know what, freshman me did a great job pulled through and set you up for success throughout the rest of your...

Karen Taylor 39:57

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 39:58

...college. That's good. A lot of times I've I found talking to people they think otherwise. That, well, they slacked off their first semester, so you certainly seem to be the anomaly in this regard.

Karen Taylor 40:10

Well, there again, when you have no choice, and you have to pay for it. You, you know, basically I was there to learn. I wasn't there to socialize, I wasn't there to do anything else, but learn and get my degree.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 40:30

Right. Just put your head down and just plow through the work. Get it done.

Karen Taylor 40:33

Yeah. Like I told my students, keep your head down, look busy, keep yourself out of trouble.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 40:39

So, you mentioned students. Does that mean you went on to teach? Well, you mentioned earlier as well that you ended up helping less fortunate kids out and such. When did that that, when did you, so obviously using your degree a little bit more than you were being a realtor or working at the consignment shop. What was it that, exactly that you were doing?

Karen Taylor 41:05

Well I was a realtor, and I was in Rochester, and then my marriage blew up, and I had lost all my houses and lost all my property. And I had to make a decision. I had, I had two kids and I had to make a decision on what to do next. And I had a great friend who said that I could move down to a farm, and I moved down to the farm with my two kids. And the only thing available, really, for me to do was to teach. So, I started teaching and I was a substitute teacher for 11 years. And I liked that because I could keep my eye on my kids and what they were doing, and know what they were doing before they got done doing it. And also, because of the strong etiquette of getting an education was put into me and I understood it. I wanted to put that in my children, and I think I was successful in that. Because I think education is extremely important.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 42:08

So, pretty much essentially you have just, your entire family going all the way back to your grandparents was all about education at that point?

Karen Taylor 42:16

Yes. Yes. And I noticed the difference between my students, that their families didn't think education was important. At, at all. They, the kids didn't think it either. They didn't understand how important it would be to have the tools in your shed to be able to do what you gotta do. And figure out what you got to figure out.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 42:40

Did you see that a lot among your peers at college too?

Karen Taylor 42:43

Um, I, basically a college I saw a lot of, you know, the kids were going to college and their parents are paying for the ride and they were in the dorms and it, they were partying and it was

all a big huge party. Especially Buffalo University, and I just didn't associate with them too much, because that's not why I was there.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 43:07

Makes sense. So pretty much, but you like, you like, you did say that you did see a difference with who education was obviously was more important for them, because you growing up the way you did. You saw the importance of education. And so for you, it was why... why isn't that, why aren't you just applying yourself in school, to your peers anyway.

Karen Taylor 43:31

Well, I think when, when parents make their children go to school, and pay for it, and the kids don't know what they want to do, and they don't know and they're going to school just because their parents say they have to. You know, they don't, they're not serious. They're not too serious. And just like you said, your freshman year hey party, let's party. Now I was older, you know, when I went to when I started school,

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 43:58

What age where you're exactly When you started school, you said there was a... there was a in between high school and college. For you...

Karen Taylor 44:05

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 44:06

...or was it one after the other?

Karen Taylor 44:07

No. I was about 21, probably something like that. Then were, you know, the other kids were 18, just out of high school. I had been out in the working world. And I also then, you know, I had physical struggles and

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 44:22

Right.

Karen Taylor 44:22

...mental struggles so that I had, you know, it was this was the thing that I... a key that I saw, that could open doors for me, that I wouldn't have been able to do. And I supported myself a lot throughout my life. And I am a survivor, and I knew that my education was going to help me be able to do that easier than not having one. And I have a love for learning. I love to learn something new every day.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 44:55

So it would seem. The... You mentioned earlier that you had lunch with the Prince of Jordan. So obviously, that's a memory that sticks out for you pretty well. Do you have any other stories

that are of the similar caliber or something that sticks out for you, that, from your college experiences? Because clearly that one that was, had to be something.

Karen Taylor 45:19

Well, yeah, yeah. And not only that, but the other people like my Lebanese friends would tell me what it was like to live in Lebanon. And the fact that you walk down the street and you might get shot, because either you're Christian or you're Muslim, or whatever it could be. And I learned a lot about the violence and the chaos that goes on in the Middle East. And I just had that taught me an appreciation for America, this country that we live in, because you don't have to really, you don't have to every time you walk out the door, you don't have to worry that you're going to get killed because of some opinion you have, you know, we're free to think. Free thinkers. And that really taught me some respect for my country, which maybe I didn't have before. But the other thing too is I learned a lot of different, um... food. When I lived in Rochester, I lived on a street where there was a lot of different nationalities and everybody always fed me everywhere I went. So, it was kind of interesting to learn the customs and the food, different foods, and I learned some Arabic, and I had no idea how bad, I had a good friend of mine from Iran, who had been tortured. And he had asked me out to dinner and I said, Okay. And I went out and he started in about us, Americans being arrogant pigs and I'm like, you know... why? And he said, because we have refrigerators and this and that, and we backed the Shah at that time. And then he took off his shoe, and his sock, and he, this is something I'll never forget, and he threw up his foot on the table, the dinner table...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 47:18

Out in the restaurant?

Karen Taylor 47:19

...out in the restaurant. And his foot was cut in half.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 47:22

Geez.

Karen Taylor 47:22

Because he was tortured. And he talked to me about the torturing that went on and the kids starving and the Shah living in this big nice castle and United States taking care of, you know, having good relations with the Shah, because they wanted the oil. Yet the people were starving, and then he talked to me about looking at your children who are starving. And when that happens, there's nothing you wouldn't do, to try and get them some food and that always stuck in my mind, because I think everyone's entitled to at least eat and have some good health care. And that's something that I've carried on through. And also at Brockport, I took a course called women in politics.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 48:13

Right.

Karen Taylor 48:14

And, I did daycare, because that was a time period where two parents started working and the children were put in daycare. And daycare is not the best thing. I think that's why you see the latch-key kids, and you see the kids that are just forgotten these days. And they're the ones that have the mental illnesses that go in with the guns in school. So, I learned a lot about all that. And I think that's why I started, I had my kids at home, and I had a daycare in my home.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 48:52

Just from learning from everywhere else how it was.

Karen Taylor 48:56

Yeah, and I, also I practiced it, you know, during the summers and stuff. I was the daycare teacher and there's thirty 2 year-olds and one teacher. And...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 49:08

Pretty much like herding cats at that point.

Karen Taylor 49:09

...it's crazy. And then they're not getting any kind of attention that they need, nor any other needs met and it's kind of like, be quiet sit down, and you'll be okay for the rest of the day. But, they weren't learning. They weren't growing. They weren't. They might have been socializing to a degree, but they didn't get that tender love and care that a kid needs.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 49:34

And that was something that you wanted to make sure other kids would get, which is why you had your daycare opened up in your own home and among other places.

Karen Taylor 49:41

Yeah, I tried.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 49:43

You did your best.

Karen Taylor 49:44

But, it's not easy.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 49:47

No, I can't imagine it is.

Karen Taylor 49:49

It was a tough, that was a tough one. But I stuck it out.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 49:55

If.. So it would seem. So you had, obviously all of these... all these, eclectic experiences...

Karen Taylor 50:06

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 50:06

...throughout school. And you keep in contact with Marilyn and Tom.

Karen Taylor 50:13

I've had eclectic experiences throughout my whole life. I could open up a drawer and pull out just about any kind of license, real estate, school bus driver, teaching certification. And, I'm eclectic myself.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 50:31

Just a multi-multifaceted person that wants to apparently venture in every different form of education.

Karen Taylor 50:36

Yeah, yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 50:38

Whether it's you learn how to drive a bus, get a certificate to teach anything, along those lines.

Karen Taylor 50:43

Real estate license, bachelor's degree, master's degree. And I'm still learning.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 50:53

I don't think anyone ever stops learning.

Karen Taylor 50:55

No, I want to audit some classes at FLCC. Now that I'm 60, you can audit them.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 51:03

And what, what does that entail?

Karen Taylor 51:05

It entails just going in there and sitting and learning and not, you don't get any credit. But, it doesn't cost you anything either.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 51:14

To provide feedback to the school, on the curriculum being taught?

Karen Taylor 51:17

I don't know, because I haven't gotten there yet. But I'm going to check into that.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 51:24

Because let's say you could kind of give them feedback on the school. Would you do you think that would be beneficial to have someone's experience who's been in like an education system, for as long as you have been?

Karen Taylor 51:34

Oh, yes. And I could give so much feedback to schools, high schools and elementary schools on what I see is going wrong, because of the fact that I got all the kids that couldn't function in the school systems. Because I was a home tutor for 35 years. So, basically, being a substitute teacher and a home tutor, I did the gambit of all that, and not to mention the fact that I could tell the government and the politicians what's going on. And the general public what's going on with these kids that bring in guns and shoot up schools. And I would like to, so many times, address these issues because there could be a way to solve them. And people are not looking at the right thing. So you know, trying to do gun control instead of taking care of a child and making sure that child is nurtured to a degree, and being able to guide them before they get to a point where they don't care about themselves. They don't care about anybody else. They just want to be noticed. So they go in and they shoot up a school. And it's a shame that they fall through the cracks like that, but that's what happens if they don't have a mentor somewhere in their life that that matters.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 52:58

And that's something that, well, clearly since, ever since you started your scholastic career, or well, you started caring more anyway. Considering what you mentioned about high school. So once you started college and you haven't pretty much, you haven't left the education system since then...

Karen Taylor 53:14

No.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 53:15

...Basically.

Karen Taylor 53:16

No. Matter-a-fact the kids would say, "I can't believe I have three more years of school. I've been in school for 10 years or whatever". And I'd say yeah, I've been in school for 45. So...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 53:31

Constantly learning yourself, while you're still teaching.

Karen Taylor 53:33

Oh, yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 53:37

Do you ever see yourself actually not being a part of the school system then?

Karen Taylor 53:42

I, my calling. It took me a long time to figure out what my calling was. I struggled with a lot of things along the way. I have many different professions, and if it weren't for the situation, I had where, I, the only job that was really around where we moved to, my kids and I, I that really forced me into going and teaching. And once I started that I knew that was where I belonged. And ever since then, I have been that. And even though I'm retired now, I still am a teacher, I still teach. And I learn every day. I mean, I try to learn every day. I, my grandfather always said, learn 10 words a day, and you'll be self educated. And so I...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 54:36

Is that your grandfather, Mullen?

Karen Taylor 54:37

Yep. And so I always try to learn a few new words a day and just to carry on that tradition.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 54:52

And then, so that's your grandfather Mullen... so that would be your mother's father.

Karen Taylor 54:57

Right. My grandfather Taylor died when my dad was four.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 55:01

Okay.

Karen Taylor 55:01

So.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 55:03

And then so he pretty much passed that mentality down from you to your mother, or well from... excuse me, from your mother to you. Until...

Karen Taylor 55:12

Well, it was more so my dad. My grandfather, really, he was my mentor. And my lifesaver. But and he, you know, was the one who made me promise him that I would go get that would get my high school education no matter what, even though I wasn't living at home. And my father went to Notre Dame to be a doctor. And, he realized how important education was. It was, and it was my father, my father's mother that said, had to do with the Nazis and stuff. Where they burnt all the books and they took away everything from everyone and the only people that really can start over again are the ones that have an education. And I am a perfect example of that, because if I did not have the education I had, when I moved down to the country, I wouldn't have had the job I got and...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 56:17

Right. That was after everything fell apart for you...

Karen Taylor 56:20

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 56:20

...and you moved down to the country.

Karen Taylor 56:22

It would have been a struggle. I mean, I was probably at best would be working down at a grocery store, making minimum wage had I not had an education. But I had an education and I was able to rebuild. And I bought my own place, because I had an education. And I was taught a lot of things along the way was able to work on it and make it into a home and try to... try my best to keep my boys in line and out of trouble.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 56:55

That can always be a hassle.

Karen Taylor 56:56

I, I think I really made it very clear that their education was extremely important. And I'm very proud of both of them for the work that they have done in their education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 57:10

So out of all the schools which one do you think influenced you the most?

Karen Taylor 57:17

Ooo, that's a hard question. MCC was kind of just, you know, you go take your classes and then you go, you're out. Buffalo University was a zoo. It was it was like if you wanted to learn what corporate America in New York City was like, go to Buffalo University. And if you want to learn what it's like to compete, and to have ruthless competition, go to Buffalo University

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 57:49

Like you mentioned earlier with...

Karen Taylor 57:50

Right.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 57:51

... the cutthroat-ness of your portfolio getting destroyed.

Karen Taylor 57:53

Right. And also only 20 people getting accepted into the art department, you had to be one of the top people. Nazareth taught me... that kinda how to find myself a little bit. I found myself, to some degree. Buffalo I couldn't find myself, it was too chaotic. It's crazy. MCC I wasn't, I

didn't know where where I was going or what was going to happen. Buffalo, like I said was crazy. Nazareth I kind of found myself. And Brockport was me, completing something that I had started, I wanted to finish it. And I wasn't quite sure whether or not I would go into teaching, cuz I was doing real estate at the time. But I was very, very grateful that I did do what I did, because that shaped the rest of my life, and I feel really successful when my students are successful.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 59:00

So you feel, essentially, pretty much Brockport has the greatest influence on you out of all the schools then?

Karen Taylor 59:08

Brockport...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 59:09

In terms of, I guess I was, how I would word it is.. did you feel a sense of accomplishment?

Karen Taylor 59:17

Yeah, I felt a sense of accomplishment. I also felt like the courses that I took and also because it's graduate school, you really have to think about things. Not just learn things and regurgitate what you have learned, but to think beyond and to come up with different possibilities. So, and Brockport because of the fact that it was in many different places. I went to the Equal Opportunity Center, I went to the Strong Museum for another course. I went to Brockport for some courses and I found that, you know, it was it was... very the other thing too that was tough. It was my life at that time.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:00:10

Right.

Karen Taylor 1:00:10

Having so much responsibility. I don't know how I did it. I don't think I could do it now. But...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:00:17

Well as you mentioned, it was very tumultuous for your well-being there.

Karen Taylor 1:00:20

Yeah. Yeah. But, and driving out to Brockport from Rochester. Was, you know, a trip.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:00:29

Well they didn't have 531 then.

Karen Taylor 1:00:31

Yeah, so going to downtown was great. You know, and I met a lot of very interesting people. And I had a much better connection with my professors, because of the fact that I was thinking

for myself, and bringing things up and writing papers on my own thoughts that they might have been interested in. So they came and talked to me about them, and asked me how I got to the thoughts I had. So there was a lot more interaction in that sense.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:01:09

Something that seems like you really appreciated then from Brockport.

Karen Taylor 1:01:13

Yes. Now, and yeah, I had this one teacher that I could not stand. I really couldn't stand her. And her and I had two opposite opinions on how to teach art. And then at the end of the semester, she offered me a job at the Memorial Art Gallery, teaching,

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:01:33

And this was the professor at Brockport. So clearly you made an impression on her.

Karen Taylor 1:01:38

Yeah. But I thought, you know, it wasn't a good one. 'Cause her and I did not. Oh, no, we did not see eye to eye on it because I believe in discipline based art education. But she believed in art for art's sake.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:01:54

Ah.

Karen Taylor 1:01:55

And so, we you know, we clashed all the time, and then she came up and offered me a job.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:02:02

Well apparently she had a good poker face then.

Karen Taylor 1:02:03

I don't know. I don't know. But you know, I'm there. I had a lot of experiences like that at Brockport that just, you know, the there again, there was an interaction with the teacher. I had a Russian professor that taught me painting. And, yeah, I just I took a painting course. And then I had a really interesting professor in politics, which I got involved in politics a lot when I lived in Rochester, but I soon learned that people argue over everything, and nobody can decide anything, and then you go home. So what's the point? So, but.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:02:43

Felt like you were just kind of spinning your wheels?

Karen Taylor 1:02:46

Always. And I think, you know, if you look at the government, that's what they do. They... there's so much in house fighting, that nothing gets resolved.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:02:58

Did you ever feel like that way in some form of college too? Like...

Karen Taylor 1:03:05

Yes. At Buffalo University, because you know, you had a lecture hall and you had 200 kids in there. You couldn't get a question answered if you wanted to. And no Professor knew you by your name, or anything else about you. So it was very impersonal. And to me that, you know, and you're graded on a curve of what the whole class did. And... I didn't like that. I didn't feel like I was getting an education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:03:41

So just too, too broad at that point, because it was like you said, it wasn't it wasn't personal. It was very impersonal. And that's where you did better at Naz and Brockport at that point.

Karen Taylor 1:03:52

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:03:53

Because you had that, you were able to go up and, like you said, have the interactions like you had with your art professor. You know where you, you thought it was negative, but it turned out to be positive in the end, but you wouldn't have, you wouldn't have been able to have that interaction at Nazareth. Or not sorry, not Nazareth. At UB.

Karen Taylor 1:04:10

Yeah, at UB. No, I wouldn't have had that interaction at all. And you know, I mean, I remember constantly getting in a pretty heated debate... about art education, and, you know, on. But that was good, I guess, in a way and I will stick to my guns. I'm like that if I believe in something, I don't usually change my mind. It's well thought out, and I come to a conclusion. I first learn my facts, and then I decide. So, you know, I was, definitely, surprised at that one. My teacher in the history of Rochester, like I said was the librarian of Rundel, and she knew all the old cronies and stuff, like rattlesnake Pete who used to catch rattlesnakes and everything was made out of rattlesnakes, his, his clothes, his car was all the leather was rattlesnakes. He used to suck the venom out of rattlesnakes, and there was like an antidote for rattlesnake bites and...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:05:32

You mean antidote or anecdote?

Karen Taylor 1:05:35

Yeah, yeah, that Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:05:37

Which one?

Karen Taylor 1:05:42

You, the thing you take when you get a rattlesnake bite so that Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:05:46

Anecdotes a little bit different.

Karen

Yeah! Yeah, there you go. There's my learning disability. I see a word, and I see how I think it might be spelled, and it's nowhere near how it should be spelled. So of course, I have to have secretaries. And that was one great thing about Nazareth college was the secretaries of each department were willing to type my papers for me.

Keegan

Well you lucked out.

Karen Taylor 1:06:16

Yeah. So I would hand in my paper and they would type it up and they would know what I was talking about because they were in that field. And I could hand it in and it would all be, the spelling would be correct and grammar would be correct and... dollar a page back then! Seven dollars, for paper or ten.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:06:40

Well, at least you don't have to worry about going through it and correcting it all yourself at that point.

Karen Taylor 1:06:43

Well... I stayed up a couple nights all night long with a little dinky typewriter that my grandmother gave me that wouldn't work half the time and... it's... lucky that the windows were still intact.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:06:58

I know that felling very well, because of technology these days, too.

Keegan

So, thinking of all all of this and your reflections on the school, obviously, you're an alumni of Brockport. Have you had any contact with Brockport, maybe anyone, you have you talked to any professors from there in recent times?

Karen Taylor 1:07:19

Nope.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:07:20

Haven't had any contact with Brockport at all?

Karen Taylor 1:07:22

Not with anybody, not with any school. And when I'm asked to donate money, I feel I already did when I paid my tuition.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:07:33

So, thinking of how you're still part of education, as.. as, you know, as we've already gone over in the various different forms. Is there anything that you think could have been better? For, like Brockport? But, you've already mentioned what, what you think of what do you think could have of been better at UB and such.

Karen Taylor 1:07:51

Yeah, yeah. And also University of Buffalo was doctors and dentists and stuff so, that you were always put down for being an artist. But, but it coulda... affordability

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:08:07

For Brockport?

Karen Taylor 1:08:09

No, Brockport was okay. Because it was a state school...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:08:12

Right.

Karen Taylor 1:08:12

...and MCC, and Buffalo University, but Nazareth was really...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:08:19

That's a private school.

Karen Taylor 1:08:20

Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:08:20

So, a bit more higher up in the cost there.

Yeah.

Karen Taylor 1:08:23

Yeah. And I think that, um... I really think that kids should. Here's the politics of education. I think that when kids are in high school, they should be tested and interviewed and whether or not they're an academic person or whether they're hands-on trade person. If they're hands on trade, they should be taught a trade and the skill that they can use when they get out of high school. If they're academically inclined, they should take the path of going to a higher education college. And I think that the state should give the opportunity for students to be able to go to college. That's something that a lot of them that can't, I know my struggles of trying to pay the

bills and trying to go to school and trying to, you know, afford it all. I think that the affordability is a problem, and it misses a lot of the kids that might have something to offer this world. And I think that if, if the state schools were free, as long as the students got good grades, then they could continue on with their education. This country is entrepreneurship and invention. That's what it was built on. And I... know that there's that much talent in the young people of today, just as there was in any other generation, it's just I'm not sure they have the opportunity, nor do they have the, um... they're not told the importance of education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:10:18

So essentially, what you're saying is you feel like they should have, well, they should be more, I guess because nowadays they harp a college to college, college, college, higher education, but there should be some form of way to have a test or multitude of tests for kids, instead of saying, hey, just go to college, like, hey maybe trade school better for you. So you're for, obviously, for higher education, but maybe in different forms,

Karen Taylor 1:10:44

Right. Because there are students that are not academically inclined, but if they did graduate with a trade that, or skill that was, you know, and you have to look at what skills are needed and service skills are certainly needed, like fixing cars and whatever.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:11:05

Right.

Karen Taylor 1:11:06

But, I think that a lot of times... one, one problem I know is a lot of students think if they go to college, they're guaranteed a job. And they're not. You're not guaranteed anything. You gotta go after it if you want it. And I think that's something that gets a little bit sidetracked. You know, go to school, and you're going to get a better job. Well, of course, and one thing that I've learned throughout, I was a retail manager on top of everything else. But I learned that college and education what it's good for is it teaches you that you can be trained, so if somebody is going to hire you and pay you more money and a higher paying job, they're going to want to see you're trained, and they want to see that you can learn.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:12:03

Right.

Karen Taylor 1:12:04

So that's really what education is about whether you get your high school degree, whether you get your associates, you know, whether you get your masters, you have been able to take that challenge and you've been able to learn from it and succeed. So that's a pretty good bet that hopefully you can be trained in a certain job, or your you can be a free thinker, or an inventor, or an engineer, or an environmental science person. Or even working in with people. You know, whether you're you go into education or you go into counseling or you go into, there's not enough mental health people in this country. And there needs to be more people that can help

people such as probation officers. That help somebody who needs it and puts them on the right track. Instead of... so there's a lot, you know, you there's your academic sciences, and then there's your interpersonal ability to work and the higher education that you get, usually that's where you acquire those skills.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:13:24

Okay. Well you seem to be quite the advocate for schooling, and that's, that's for sure.

Karen Taylor 1:13:30

Oh, yes, definitely. And it's, it's very, I'm very serious about it. Because you are, what you know...and what you accomplish, what you can accomplish, has a lot to do with what you know. And you can learn from anywhere. And of course, you're going to get that argument from a lot of people but basically... again, the more you learn how to be trained, not only are you being trained, but you're learning how to be trained in education. And therefore you learn how to learn. You learn how to listen, you learn how to pay attention, you learn how to interact interpersonally. So, all of the things that make us the social animals that we are in society, education helps us to be able to fit in it, and maneuver in it and also take care of ourselves and our families. So it's much bigger thing than most people realize, I think, or teach their children. But, I always did my best to let the kids that I taught, know that you're only hurting yourself if you don't get an education.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:13:48

Well, from the sounds of your le.. you've left behind quite the legacy of that then.

Karen Taylor 1:15:05

Yes. And I have not stopped yet.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:15:10

I can't Ima.. I can't see you doing, doing so anytime soon, it would seem.

Karen Taylor 1:15:14

Nope.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:15:15

Well, I mean, all of this has been very eye opening. You've had quite the experiences throughout the years. I want to thank you very much for sharing all of this with me. I hope it's been good to get it out there for you too.

Karen Taylor 1:15:31

Uh, yeah, it's, it's... It is, as the kids say: "It is what it is." But, what do you think of my experiences in education?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:15:47

Well, like I said, I think you've had quite the uh... I guess how to say how, to put this quite the run of the mill. It's gone from, you know, your own education, went from high school to not really, not really caring in high school to...well then to, alright, well, I gotta buckle down, I got to take care of this, and you learn from yourself at that point. You know, you've learned you learn from yourself, and you learned to pay attention, as you said, you need to learn to how to be a better learner. And, you know, that also got you got helped out at that point from your one professor saying: "Hey, wait a minute, what's going on here?", and then took you to the side, and then got to help you get tested and you figured out that out, which obviously in turn helped probably help, obviously, helped you throughout the years.

Karen Taylor 1:16:32

It definitely helped me teaching because I understood kids that just don't get it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:16:37

Right.

Karen Taylor 1:16:37

They just don't get it. And people don't understand, how can you not get it? But, "I don't get it". You don't have that computer chip in you. So, I, I could understand the learning disabilities because having one or two, but...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:16:55

Who's counting?

Karen Taylor 1:17:00

What do you think of education?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:17:02

Well, unfortunately, I'm not the one being interviewed, but I can give you a little bit of my insight on education. I believe that education is necessary. Otherwise, well, then you live in a world of ignorance. And with a world of ignorance, then you're just doomed to repeat past histories. You're not going to be progress, you're not gonna progress forward, you're not... you're just gonna be stagnant, and uh...

Karen Taylor 1:17:25

limited.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:17:25

...Stagnant, limited, and not, not nearly as much will be accomplished, without education. And but as you as you mentioned earlier, there should be some split between, well, what, what who should go to higher education because they're better suited for it versus someone who might be better off going to like a trade school and getting, you know, get by the end of the trade school to get their certificate, they're already out, working, they already had all the experience and they love it, and enjoy it. Whereas as you mentioned, sometimes people, kids, had the

idea: "Oh, I'm done with college. I need to be... well now that I'm done... oh, I should be getting a job right now." It doesn't work that way.

Karen Taylor 1:18:07

It's gonna come knock on the door. Yeah.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:18:12

Well, that's basically my thoughts on it. But I mean, certainly, that's been imparted in what you've said today as well.

Karen Taylor 1:18:22

I think that if you have, if you're taught a skill that you can use, that's one tool in your shed. Each skill is another tool, more tools you have, the more you can build on. And also life doesn't always take you where you think it should go. And things fall apart, and you need to rebuild, and you can if you have the knowledge to know how to. But, if you don't have that knowledge, you're pretty much lost. And, if you're not lost, you could be taken advantage of and also It's a terrible thing to see a young mind that could be... so much contributing to the society not being able to have the opportunity to do so. And I think that in the future, especially with this new technological revolution, there has to be a very strong understanding of interpersonal relationships and how the... individual functions in, in society. And I think that technology is taking away from that, then there's not as much communication going on. So I think education is going to be very important to make, to teach people how to interact because they're gonna have to learn that. And if you sit in front of a video game or you're on your phone all the time, or on your computers, and your car drives itself and you just tell the lights to turn on... you...

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:20:13

How much are you actually learning at that point now how much you're applying.

Karen Taylor

Yep.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F

And, really, what you're getting at that point, right?

Karen Taylor 1:20:19

Yeah, it's the same as a parent that does everything for a child, and the child gets out of the house and doesn't know what to do. Versus a parent that teaches a child from the very beginning everything that they know, so that when they get out, they could be independent, functioning adults. You can see the big difference between those two things. And you can see that in college. College, teaches you that in a New York minute, who's been taught all their life and who's been had things done for them and handed to them.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:20:50

Who's just been going through the motions, if you will.

Karen Taylor 1:21:01

Yeah, and they don't really know. They don't know how to do their own laundry. They don't know how to... they wouldn't know how to survive on their own. They wouldn't know anything. If you, if they ended up out in the woods. They'd die. Because they have no skills in any of those areas. Where I think that parenting starts with your education, but then school picks it up. And teachers matter a lot. A good teacher. One good teacher. Do you have a teacher, that was your favorite teacher?

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:21:46

I'd have to say, I have a couple. There's not, there's probably... two high school teacher, well, I guess one was elementary, and an elementary teacher that was really influential on me, Mr. Liebentrit, in fifth grade. And then I had um... in high school, I had two teachers that really influenced me quite a bit. Mr. Freivald and... Mr. Petrie. Mr. Freivald taught science, physics, Mr. Petrie taught history, social studies kind of stuff. And then Mr. Liebentrit did everything, I would say being Elementary,

Karen Taylor 1:22:27

See, the fact that you can remember that. And I can tell you some teachers that really had some influence on me, myself too. And some that really cared and taught me more than just academic things that I was doing. They're the ones that kind of shape your world for you. So, that's where, again, I think education is extremely important. And we live in a country where it's a we... everyone is entitled to a free and appropriate education, which I believe is a privilege.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:23:10

Well, you've certainly been doing your part to help everyone out.

Karen Taylor 1:23:13

Well, I try.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:23:14

Well, hopefully, also with the... if you get to do sit down to your audit and maybe you'll be able to help some curriculum at FLCC.

Karen Taylor 1:23:23

Yeah, yeah, I, if I did anything, I would like to help the government understand why there's so many problems with the children of today in schools because those are the, that was the group that I worked with. Problem children, or children at risk, or however you want to say it. But, I understood where they were coming from, and they're just lost. They just need to be found and they need to be loved.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:23:54

Yeah.

Karen Taylor 1:23:55

And it's not, it's not too hard to do that once you get their trust. And I think that's what is part of the whole technological revolution that's happening right now. Which I think about all the time, when I grew up, it was, uh, the 60s, and all the cultural revolution... rebellion and free spirit, and hippies, and all that good stuff, rock and roll.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:24:35

Much like the rebellion that you apparently had in high school...

Karen Taylor

Yes.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F

...by not going to school, so I guess that would fall under, down with the man?

Karen Taylor 1:24:43

I liked to go to school and just cause trouble and I caused just enough trouble... that I didn't get into trouble, but I got everybody riled up...

Keegan

Aha, very well.

Karen

... and because my parents kicked me out of the house. Who are they going to call, the Ghostbusters? So I just, and it was easy. High School was easy. But I learned a lot of tricks of the trade, too.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:25:11

Know what to look for when you were teaching yourself?

Karen Taylor 1:25:14

Yeah. So things like just learn five facts and think about them all day, and then you can write a really good essay, and not have to read the book. I could do that. And that's why I had an eighty average, or even though I went to school, maybe two times a week. But when I went in, I liked to cause a lot of trouble... and then I could leave when I felt like and then school couldn't do anything about it. So, they were happy to see me graduate.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:25:52

Well, you went on the bigger and better things afterwards, anyway.

Karen Taylor 1:25:55

Yeah. Well, that taught me how to deal with... the other, you know, the kids that were similar later on. Yeah, I understood them.

Keegan

Yep. Very much, so it would seem.

Karen

So, education is extremely important.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:26:14

Now I can see that, especially from your eyes well... yeah, well absolutely. This was a very informative interview. Thank you for taking your time.

Karen Taylor 1:26:29

You're more than welcome.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:26:33

Well, I hope the best for you, and I hope you actually get to influence more people as you keep going on with your career in education and so on.

Karen Taylor 1:26:42

Yes, they, um... teaching is my calling and fortunately, or unfortunately, any innocent bystander that I might be able to teach something to will learn about it.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:26:54

I can imagine so.

Karen Taylor 1:26:57

And I will never stop being a teacher, and I know that.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:27:02

Well, thank you very much for keep on, keepin on keepin on.

Karen Taylor 1:27:04

Thank you. Thank you.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F (klesl1) 1:27:07

I wish you, hope you the best.

Karen Taylor 1:27:08

And I wish you the best, too.

Leslie-Taylor, Keegan F

Thank you.

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